

STORM DAMAGE AT COLUMBUS, OHIO, JANUARY 26, 1932

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A storm with winds of damaging force and certain tornadic characteristics occurred at Columbus, Ohio, on January 26, 1932. One person was injured and the value of the property destroyed was estimated to be between \$3,000 and \$4,000.

Nearly all the damage was reported from two different sections of the city and, although the two sections are separated by a distance of about 5 miles, the damaging winds occurred at nearly the same time in the two places. The damage reported from other sections of the city was of a minor nature and was confined to billboards, wires, trees, etc.

The greater portion of the damage occurred in a section near the center of the city and a mile and a quarter directly north of the Weather Bureau station. The damage at this point extended from Summit Street, in a northeasterly direction, diagonally across Hamlet Street and East Second Avenue and into North Fourth Street. Slight damage was caused to a residence on the west side of Summit Street and a billboard was blown down on the east side of the street. From this point the path crossed a vacant space about one block in extent. On the east side of Hamlet Street the roofs of the upper story porches on an 8-family duplex row were carried away and deposited in the street to the northeast of the building. On the north side of East Second Avenue the south wall of the second story of a 2-story brick dwelling was blown in. The brick and debris of the wall fell over a bed in which a woman and her 9-year-old daughter had just retired. The woman was painfully injured but the little girl was unhurt. At another residence on the north side of East Second Avenue, a falling chimney crashed through the roof and directly to the northeast, on the west side of North Fourth Street, a brick wall extending about 3 feet above the roof of a row of 2-story flats was blown eastward crashing the verandas of the entrances to six of the apartments in the row. The wall formed a false front to the row of apartments and the portion of the wall blown over was about 60 feet in length, a portion of the false front remained intact at either end of the building.

The debris from the roofs and brick walls had been cleared from the streets immediately so that when the scene was visited it was impossible to detect whether or not there had been any whorl as would be expected in a tornado. However, the path of destruction was remarkably straight and narrow and the direction was from the southwest to the northeast. The total length of the path was about 1,000 feet—a part of it being over vacant, treeless ground—and the width about 60 feet.

The other scene of destruction was at a point almost directly east of the Weather Bureau station and about $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles distant. Here a frame barn was completely wrecked, the foundation blown clean, and the various parts of the building with its contents—rye straw in part—scattered over more than an acre of ground. This place is located on the east edge of the city and the dwellings are far apart which probably accounts for the fact that only the one building was damaged directly by the wind. The barn was located about 70 feet to the southwest of the dwelling and a large section of the barn,

possibly the flooring in the loft, was hurled against the dwelling, smashing in a small porch on the southwest corner of the house. A piece of timber from the barn, 2 by 4 inches and about 5 feet long, was hurled endways almost through the second-story wall of the frame dwelling.

The strong southeasterly component of the wind was clearly shown by the destruction of the barn. In fact, the building seems to have been crushed by a force from the southeast and then caught up immediately by the southwest wind and scattered towards the northeast. A large piece of the siding of the barn, weighing possibly 500 pounds, was carried clear of the ground to a point about 100 feet directly north of the cement foundation. Another portion of the building weighing about 200 pounds was thrown to the northwest of the foundation, about 50 feet away. This latter object was in a position indicating clearly that it had been carried by a southeasterly wind. A small fruit tree standing several feet to the northwest of the foundation caught the straw in its branches and the position of the straws shows that the final direction of the wind was from the southwest. Several other small orchard trees standing to northwest, north, and northeast of the barn foundation also caught the long rye straws in their branches and the straws were drawn tightly over the branches and pointing northeasterly.

The various instruments at the station indicated that the wind shift line passed over between 10:35 p. m. and 10:40 p. m. The lowest station pressure was 28.79 inches about 10:30 p. m., the fall from noon being about 0.45 inch. At the time of the shift the barograph pen rose suddenly for about 0.05 inch and then continued in a steady, rapid rise. The temperature dropped 8° or 9° from about 45°, in less than 30 minutes. The surface wind had been steadily from the southeast for several hours and shifted to the south at 10:35 p. m. and to the southwest about 3 minutes later. For two minutes the wind was from the southwest about this time and then became steady from the southwest. The maximum velocity recorded at the station was 30 miles from the southwest at 10:40 p. m. with an extreme velocity of 31 miles. Light rain fell during a considerable portion of the day with a small amount of hail when the wind shifted. No thunder was heard during the storm but thunderstorms were reported from the southern portion of the State on the evening of the 26th.

The weather map showed a weak Low over western Nebraska on the morning of the 26th. At 7:40 p. m. a center was located a short distance south of Indianapolis and on the morning of the 27th it appeared near Canton, N. Y., so that the center of the disturbance was probably passing to the northeast at a point about 100 miles north of Columbus at the time of the storm winds. Between the time of the p. m. observation of the 26th and the a. m. observation of the 27th the center of the Low apparently shifted over a distance of more than 600 miles or at a rate of over 50 miles per hour. By the morning of the 28th the Low had increased considerably in intensity and moved to a position near Newfoundland with a center below 29 inches.